

MOTION BY SUPERVISORS SHEILA KUEHL AND DON KNABE

September 13, 2016

Options to Increase Funds Collected for Domestic Violence Shelter-Based

Programs and Methods for Reporting Funds Collected

The County of Los Angeles (County) has identified and taken a number of steps to address the pervasive homelessness crisis currently affecting thousands of County residents, including women, veterans, children, seniors, LGBT youth, and persons with disabilities. The 2016 Homeless Count released by the Los Angeles Housing Services Authority estimated there are 47,000 homeless people living in the County on any given night and the number of homeless women within the County has risen 55% since 2013.

Of the 13,643 homeless women who were homeless in the County on the nights of the 2016 homeless count, nearly 65% reported that they had previously experienced intimate partner violence and/or sexual abuse.

Research has shown a nexus between intimate partner violence and homelessness. Many victims of intimate partner violence are controlled by their abusers; they are forbidden to work and become isolated from family and friends. When these victims flee their abusers, they do so with limited belongings and

MOTION

RIDLEY-THOMAS _____

KUEHL _____

KNABE _____

ANTONOVICH _____

SOLIS _____

no support system, which can lead to homelessness and further trauma.

The County's Department of Public Social Services (DPSS) provides support and assistance to these victims of intimate partner violence through its shelter based and supportive services programs. DPSS also administers the County's Domestic Violence Special Fund (DV Fund) which pays for these programs. The money for the DV Fund comes exclusively from a \$23 fee from each marriage license the County issues and from fees collected when attendance at domestic violence batterers' programs is ordered by the Superior Court as a condition of probation in domestic violence cases and the abuser is ordered to pay to attend the program.

In an effort to reduce homelessness by strengthening shelter based and supportive services for victims of domestic violence, the County has explored ways to obtain additional funding for these programs. On February 9, 2016, the Board of Supervisors directed County Counsel to report back on options for increasing funds collected through marriage license fees and domestic violence batterers' programs fees, as well as options for accurately reporting the amount of funds collected on a quarterly basis.

On July 5, 2016, County Counsel reported the following: marriage license fees could be increased in an amount reasonably necessary to recover the County's direct and indirect costs in providing marriage licenses; the Los Angeles County Probation Department can regularly recommend domestic violence batterers programs fees as part of court-ordered probation reports in domestic violence cases; and, the Board of Supervisors is entitled to quarterly reports from DPSS on the status of the DV Fund.

WE, THEREFORE, MOVE that the Board of Supervisors:

1. Direct the Los Angeles County Registrar-Recorder/County Clerk to initiate a fee study to determine the need, if any, for an increase in the marriage license fees in the County in an amount reasonable to recover the County's direct costs in providing marriage licenses. Any recommended increase in fees, if subsequently ordered, would potentially free up general fund dollars to be allocated to the Domestic Violence Special Fund;

2. Direct the Los Angeles County Probation Department to report back in 90 days with recommendations on how to reduce the number of cases where Domestic Violence Batters' Program fees are waived as part of court-ordered probation in domestic violence cases, as well as methods to ensure any such fees ordered by the court are collected by the Probation Department and/or the Superior Court and timely deposited into the Domestic Violence Special Fund; and

3. Direct the Los Angeles County Department of Public Social Services to report on an annual basis on the status of the Domestic Violence Special Fund, including the total amount of the fund for the previous fiscal year, the current balance of the fund, all deposits, and amounts disbursed.

S:MR/DV Funds